

Washington, DC—Today, Congressman John Olver, Senator John Kerry, and Congressman Richard Neal, along with the Department of Transportation announced \$745,689 for the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) to establish a state-of-the-art interactive passenger information system. The funding was awarded as part of the Bus and Bus Livability Grant Program administered by the Department of Transportation.

The Passenger Information System will give seniors and mobility impaired riders 24/7 access to real time traveler, trip planning, scheduling, and customer service information. The new automated system will also proactively send transit service notifications such as next bus, paratransit call ahead, and travel service advisories to passengers using voice, text, and email messaging.

“This funding makes public transit more predictable and accessible for bus riders in Pioneer Valley. No longer will seniors and mobility impaired riders have to guess when their vehicle will arrive. They will now receive a call when the bus is minutes away and can await their trip in the safety and comfort of their own home,” said Congressman Olver.

“Over the past few years, PVTA’s IT Department has been working diligently to develop the backbone system to allow the dissemination of real time arrival information for PVTA’s fixed route and paratransit service for mobility impaired persons and senior citizens. Today’s announcement gives PVTA the ability to transmit the real time information to our passengers. Our paratransit riders will appreciate this new capability because there is currently a 20 minute window before or after the scheduled arrival time of our vehicles. Now they will know the actual arrival time. Many of our fixed route buses operate at frequencies of 30 minutes or greater, and I believe that if the public knows with confidence that a bus will arrive at a certain time and if they will not have to wait outside in the elements, more people will choose to ride PVTA. I would like to add that none of this would be possible without Congressman Olver’s assistance,” said Mary MacInnes, PVTA Administrator.

“This investment will make travel more convenient and safer for thousands of commuters in the Pioneer Valley . I’m grateful to Secretary LaHood and the Obama Administration for continuing to provide our state with the resources it needs to improve transportation systems throughout the region,” said Senator Kerry.

Last week, the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee of the House of Representatives approved an additional \$1,000,000 for a different piece of the PVTA Information System Project in the FY 2011 Transportation HUD bill. This funding would be used for the installation of information kiosks and real time arrival signage at major bus stops, such as the Holyoke Mall. It would also establish interior and exterior security video. PVTA will work with the Holyoke Police Department to ensure the video security system functions in accordance with their needs and creates the safest possible environment for employees and passengers.

The FY 2011 Transportation HUD bill now awaits consideration by the full House and Senate.

For more information, please contact Mary MacInnes, PVTA Administrator at (413) 732-6248 ex. 216

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